

Remarks/Arguments

In response to the Final Office Action mailed May 11, 2006, independent claim 15 and dependent claims 21 and 26 have been amended.

Claims 22-25 have been canceled in this amendment.

Claim 20 were already canceled prior to this amendment.

Claims 27-36 were withdrawn prior to this amendment.

Claims 37-43 have been added.

After entry of this amendment, claims 15-19, 21, 26, and 37-43 are pending.

It is respectfully submitted that each and every feature recited in the amended claims and newly added claims are fully supported in the specification as filed. No new matter has been added.

Rejections under 35 USC 103(a)

The Office Action has rejected apparatus claims 15-19 and 21-26 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA (Applicant's admitted prior art) including Lenz et al. (US 5,534,751) by incorporation in view of Yasushi Arai (JP11214487), hereinafter "Lenz" and "Arai."

Applicant respectfully traverses.

With respect to the rejection under 35 USC 103 based on the angular offset feature between the stepped hanger structure and the locking bore, Applicant continues to maintain, as discussed in the response submitted on January 19, 2006, that neither Applicant's admitted prior art (AAPA), Lenz et al. (5,534,751) or Yasushi Arai (JP11214487), alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the angular offset feature. As discussed in the response dated January 19, 2006, Applicant continues to maintain that the angular offset feature between the stepped hanger structure and the locking bore is not a mere rearrangement of parts as alleged by the Examiner since, as the Examiner admitted in the Office Action dated October 19, 2005, "installing stepped hanger (235) in line with the locking bore (205) would not make it work." This admission by the

Examiner in the October 19, 2005 Office Action is in accord with Applicant's position all along, i.e., the angular offset feature is critical and is not a mere rearrangement of parts.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully maintains that the criticality of this angular offset feature renders the Examiner's assertion unsupportable (i.e., the assertion that the angular offset feature between the stepped hanger structure and the locking bore is a mere rearrangement of parts and thus not entitled to patentable weight).

In this amendment, Applicant has further amended claim 15 to clarify the position and relative dimension of the receiving bore as well as the position and relative dimension of the locking bore.

Applicant has clarified herein the relative positioning of the stepped hanger structure and the hanger assembly with respect to the top ring. In amended claim 15, the hanger assembly is coupled to one surface (e.g., the top surface in the example of Fig. 3) of the top ring and projecting in one direction without traversing through the set of lower rings. In this position, the plunger shaft protrudes from one surface (e.g., the top surface in the example of Fig. 3) of the top ring. On the other hand, the stepped hanger structure is coupled to the opposite surface (e.g., the lower surface in the example of Fig. 3) of the top ring and projecting in the opposite direction while traversing through at least one ring of the set of lower rings.

Since these features are not disclosed or suggested in the prior art of record, alone or in combination, the allowance of claim 15 and its dependent claims should be granted, at least based on the features discussed above.

Newly added claims 37-43 recite features that are also not disclosed or suggested by the prior art of record, each taken alone or in combination. The allowance of these claims is also respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of the discussion herein, Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at 408-257-5500.

If any petition is required to facilitate the entry of the present amendment, please consider this communication a petition therefore as well. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees beyond the amount enclosed which may be required, or to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-2284 (Order No. LMRX-P040).

Respectfully submitted,

/Joseph A. Nguyen/ #37,899

Joseph A. Nguyen